

## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE



Lead Officer: <i>Frank Bartle</i>		Service: <i>Customer Services Directorate</i>
Role: <i>Property and Estates Manager</i>		
New or Existing area of work? <i>New</i>		Area of work to be assessed: <i>Choice Based Lettings Policy</i>
1.	<p><b>Identify the main aims of the function, strategy, policy, procedure or service</b></p> <p>Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of this policy/service/ function or area of work</p>	<p><i>The NSDC CBL Policy provides a fair and transparent procedure for the allocation of NSDC properties and the administration of the housing register. NSDC has delegated management responsibility for the management of its housing stock to Newark and Sherwood Homes Ltd – an Arms Length Management Organisation. Newark and Sherwood Homes manages and implements the CBL Policy on behalf of the council.</i></p>
2.	<p><b>Assessing Relevance</b></p> <p><b>Who is affected by the function, strategy, policy, procedure or service</b></p> <p>Please assess the relevance of the policy/service/ function to the promotion of equality of each of the six equality</p>	

	strands (race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief and age)		
2a.	Who is the <b>function, strategy, policy, procedure or service</b> for?		<p><i>NSDC &amp; NSH Staff, RSL Partners.</i></p> <p><i>Applicants to the Housing Register :</i></p> <p>Anyone aged 16 years or over unless they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subject to immigration controls under the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, unless they <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Already hold a Secure tenancy</li> <li>○ Already hold an Assured tenancy</li> <li>○ Are in a class prescribed by regulations made by the Secretary of State, these classes include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Having Refugee status</li> <li>▪ Having exceptional leave to remain in the UK</li> <li>▪ Having indefinite leave to remain in the UK</li> <li>▪ Persons subject to immigration control who are a National of a country that has ratified the European Convention on Social and Medical Assistance (ECSMA) of the European Social Charter</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Any application identified as falling under the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 will be assessed in accordance with the Act.</p> <p><i>Current tenants of NSH – Transfer Applicants</i></p>
2b.	Does the <b>function, strategy, policy, procedure or service</b> affect the public directly or indirectly?	Yes	<i>The CBL Policy directly affects applicants on the housing register. It indirectly affects the wider community with regard to the allocation of property.</i>
2c.	Does the <b>function, strategy, policy, procedure or service</b> affect how other policies, services or functions are provided?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>NSH Equalities and Diversity Strategy 2008-2011,</i></li> <li>• <i>NSH Voids Process sets out Newark and Sherwood Homes intention to process and relet empty properties in the minimum possible time, to agreed standards of</i></li> </ul>

		<p><i>cleanliness and repair, and under sound financial control.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>NSDC Housing Strategy co-ordinates the housing related activities that take place in Newark and Sherwood District including an analysis of the housing needs of the area. It Identifies what resources will be used and how the Council will work in partnership with key stakeholders to deliver the strategy. The Strategic Housing Service is also responsible for developing the CBL Policy</i></li> <li>• <i>NSDC Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013 sets out how the Council will work with a range of partner agencies including Newark and Sherwood Homes to tackle homelessness in Newark and Sherwood and help those who face this most extreme form of housing need. NSDC Housing Options and NSH Housing Choice have developed a close working relationship to address homelessness across the district.</i></li> <li>• <i>NSH Domestic Violence Policy makes provision for a management transfer for NSH tenants where investigations demonstrate that a move to another part of the district would alleviate the violence and result in no loss of tenure security.</i></li> <li>• <i>NSH Financial Inclusion Policy includes financial support for new tenants at sign up.</i></li> </ul>
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>NSH Access and Customer Care Strategy sets out the standard of care and service which our customers can expect from Newark and Sherwood Homes.</i></li> <li>• <i>NSH Literacy Policy makes a commitment to support new tenants at property sign up.</i></li> <li>• <i>NSH Resident Involvement Strategy sets out NSH objective to involve residents in the development , delivery and review of its services.</i></li> </ul>
2d.	Have complaints been received from different equality groups about the <b>function, strategy, policy, procedure or service</b> and its effect on them?	<b>Yes</b>	<i>Various complaints have been received and logged in the corporate complaints database regarding CBL. These complaints include concerns regarding the method of assessment for those with medical needs. This indicates that NSH may need to address issues of vulnerability by monitoring this pattern.(See Improvement Plan 1)</i>
2e.	Does the <b>function, strategy, policy, procedure or service</b> have employment implications?	<b>Yes</b>	<i>NSH must complete a ‘Staff Declaration of Interest’ with regard to any allocation of property where they or a member of their family has a personal interest. Where an interest is declared or identified, work is allocated to another Officer and/or the work is reviewed by the appropriate manager Allocations to members of staff are subject to additional scrutiny and are authorized by a senior manager prior to offer.</i>
If the answer to some or all of the above questions is yes, then that function or policy will be 'relevant' –			

**please continue with the assessment.** If you are sure that your answer is no to all of the above questions, then you do not need to continue. However, it may help to check that you are correct in this assumption by continuing for the next few questions.

### Full Assessment

3.	<p>Stakeholders/Beneficiaries Which groups are intended to benefit from this <b>function, strategy, policy, procedure or service</b></p>	<p><i>NSDC &amp; NSH Staff, RSL Partners.</i> <i>Applicants to the Housing Register :</i> Anyone aged 16 years or over unless they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subject to immigration controls under the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, unless they             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Already hold a Secure tenancy</li> <li>○ Already hold an Assured tenancy</li> <li>○ Are in a class prescribed by regulations made by the Secretary of State, these classes include                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Having Refugee status</li> <li>▪ Having exceptional leave to remain in the UK</li> <li>▪ Having indefinite leave to remain in the UK</li> <li>▪ Persons subject to immigration control who are a National of a country that has ratified the European Convention on Social and Medical Assistance (ECSMA) of the European Social Charter</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">Any application identified as falling under the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 will be assessed in accordance with the Act.</p> <p><i>Current tenants of NSH – Transfer Applicants</i></p>
4.	<p>Outsourced Services If your <b>function, strategy, policy, procedure or service</b> is partly or wholly provided by external organisations/agencies on behalf of the service, please list any arrangements you have to ensure that the function/service promotes equality. Include this in your improvement plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Housing Management provided by Newark and Sherwood Homes Ltd</i></li> <li>• <i>Nottinghamshire County Council Adult Social Care and Health - Occupational Health Team carry out assessments for suitability of properties prior to allocation to residents with physical disabilities. Nottinghamshire County Council have assessed</i></li> </ul>

		<p><i>themselves as Level 3 of the Local Government Equality Standards – they are awaiting validation.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Newark and Sherwood District council have nomination rights with Housing Associations including Nottinghamshire Community Housing Association. NCHA have an E &amp; D policy which includes a commitment to completing EIA's for all its policies.</i></li> <li>• <i>Informal arrangements exist with support organisations including Framework Housing Association to provide tenancy support</i></li> <li>• <i>NSDC and NSH have agreed joint working protocols with Emmaus Trust, NACRO and Portland House, Newark</i></li> <li>• <i>Partnership arrangements in place with Police and Probation Service regarding referencing of housing applications.</i></li> </ul>	
		<p>If the answer to any of the Questions 5-10 below is yes, please indicate in the appropriate cell below what existing evidence (either anecdotal or documented) do you have for this? Complaints/Feedback/Consultation/Research/Data?</p>	
5	<p>Are there concerns that the <b>function, strategy, policy, procedure or service</b> does or could have a differential impact due to age?</p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>	<p><i>As of June 2008, 26 % of waiting list applicants and 37% of transfer list applicants are over the age of 60.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Age criteria is set for certain property types – this is relaxed when there is a proven medical/ social need for supported housing</i></li> <li>• <i>CBL Review 2006 included the following</i></li> </ul>

		<p><i>comments from the Eastern Area Panel):</i> <i>“Concerns regarding the age designation of properties not being used and allowing younger applicants with medical need to be housed on sheltered schemes. Feels it doesn’t work to have young people on sheltered schemes and the age criteria should be used in the first instance. Elderly people living below families doesn’t work neither should a 20 year old get ground floor accommodation before an elderly person.”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>There are concerns that older people may struggle to access CBL due to issues with technology – text bidding etc. More robust monitoring of non bidders may capture this perceived trend.( See IP2)</i></li><li>• <i>There is a possibility of age discrimination within any <b>local lettings policy</b> within CBL. This is mitigated by the broad criteria applied to eligibility within the scheme.</i></li><li>• <i>Consultation with users, staff and support agencies raised concerns regarding the lack of accommodation available in rural areas for young people. It is a fact that 46% of NSDC stock is designated for older people and that the majority of single persons accommodation and family accommodation is based in the larger towns of Newark and Ollerton. This is monitored by NSDC Housing Needs Survey and NSDC Housing Strategy.</i></li></ul>
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			<p><i>Applicants between 16 and 18 years old will only be housed if details of a guarantor are supplied and show they can meet the responsibilities of a tenancy. Newark and Sherwood Homes works closely with Emmaus Trust and Nacro to ensure that young applicants from supported housing are ready for move on accommodation.</i></p>
6.	<p>Are there concerns that the <b>function, strategy, policy, procedure or service</b> does or could have a differential impact due to disability?</p>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The CBL Policy states that applicants with a disability will be treated on an individual basis</i></li> <li>• <i>Accessibility of information can be an issue due to the restricted formats which are readily available. (although no requests for alternative formats to date)(See IP 3)</i></li> <li>• <i>Service take up from vulnerable parts of the community has not yet been measured</i></li> <li>• <i>Aids and Adaptations - existing resources are not being used to best effect as properties with adaptations are sometimes re- allocated to applicants with no requirement. This is due to incomplete information held on the housing system on aids and adaptations improvements.(See IP 4)</i></li> <li>• <i>There have been complaints recorded regarding the print size of advertised properties. This was reinforced at a recent meeting of the Newark and Sherwood District Federation of Tenants and Residents Association (30.06.08) where those present commented that the Chad Advert has</i></li> </ul>

			<i>smaller print than the Newark Advertiser. (See IP3)</i>
7.	Are there concerns that the <b>function, strategy, policy, procedure or service</b> does or could have a differential impact due to gender?	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>There is no evidence of differential impact although a local lettings policy could adversely affect community cohesion if not monitored.(See IP 8)</i></li> <li>• <i>NSH is aware that requesting only a birth certificate as proof of identity may discriminate against transgender applicants.(See IP5)</i></li> </ul>
8.	Are there concerns that the <b>function, strategy, policy, procedure or service</b> does or could have a differential impact due to race/ethnicity?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Newark and Sherwood Homes are members of the Gypsy &amp; Traveller Accommodation Issues Monitoring Group. As of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008, Gypsy and Travellers constituted 0.09% of the waiting list .</i></li> <li>• <i>Documents are available in other languages on request but are not readily available (although we have had no requests for document translation to date). There is evidence of new emerging BME groups in particular the A8 Accession states and we are monitoring our tenant diversity data to identify trends. Our strapline has been revised to reflect the emerging Polish community within Newark and we are building relationships with ‘Together’ a local Polish and Eastern European community</i></li> </ul>

			<i>group.</i>
9.	Are there concerns that the <b>function, strategy, policy, procedure or service</b> does or could have a differential impact due to religious belief or faith?	<b>Yes</b>	<i>There is no evidence to suggest this in the consultation process or other feedback, however existing housing application form does not profile customers on belief/ faith (see IP6)</i>
10.	Are there concerns that the <b>function, strategy, policy, procedure or service</b> does or could have a differential impact due to sexual orientation?	<b>Yes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Staff, service users and support agencies have raised concerns that same sex couples may not receive the same treatment as other applicants when applying for a joint tenancy/succession etc. The CBL Policy does not discriminate here and married and same sex partners have equal rights to accommodation and awards joint tenancies to applicants regardless of marital status.</i></li> <li><i>The current housing application form does not request details of sexual orientation. This information is also not collected for CORE data at the moment. (See IP6)</i></li> </ul>
11.	With regard to Questions 5-10 above, does your assessment show that a <b>function, strategy, policy, procedure or service</b> is adversely affecting relations between different equality groups?	<b>Yes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>There is only anecdotal evidence that suggests that allocation to emerging migrant communities is affecting relations with other racial groups. We have Polish, Latvian and Lithuanian applicants who have been housed but no subsequent complaints of harassment from neighbours.</i></li> <li><i>New local connection clause in CBL policy could be seen to be discriminatory. Local lettings policies could favour one equality group over another in the interests of creating sustainable communities. The CRE</i></li> </ul>

			<p><i>Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Housing states that if there is broad criteria for eligibility within the policy, it is unlikely to be challenged on the grounds of indirect discrimination. The NSDC CBL Policy includes a variety of ways for an applicant to demonstrate eligibility including residency, employment, family connections or other special circumstances.</i></p> <p><i>Consultation with service users has raised concerns regarding the self-selection process made possible with Choice Based Lettings. It was expressed that “some communities may not benefit as the policy allows families and groups of people to live together which may alter the diversity and make-up of some communities detrimentally.”</i></p>
12.	If Yes, can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group, or as part of a wider strategy of positive action in relation to particular groups?	<b>Yes</b>	<p>If yes, please explain, in the Improvement Plan section below, what steps you will take to limit this adverse impact, or any potential it may have for damaging relations between groups, or consider alternative policies that might better achieve the promotion of equality?</p> <p>Please explain your plan of action for each relevant equality heading (questions 5 - 10) on the Improvement Plan (e.g. adapt the policy; find another way to meet policy objectives; consider specific provision ; adopt changes in communication methods; language support; disability measures etc for relevant groups)</p>
13.	If the adverse impact cannot be justified, does the		Where the adverse impact is unlawful, the

	adverse impact amount to unlawful discrimination?	<b>Yes /No</b>	<b>function, strategy, policy, procedure or service</b> or the element of it that is unlawful must be changed or abandoned. If an adverse impact is unavoidable, then it must be justified, as outlined in the question above.
<b>14. Consultation</b>			
<p>What does available data and the results of any consultation show about the take up and appropriateness of your <b>function, strategy, policy, procedure or service</b>. This should include consultation from those who are likely to be directly affected by the policy e.g. users/potential users from the six equality categories; staff; relevant interest groups.</p> <p>Where there is insufficient data or knowledge about the equalities target groups' needs, you will need to undertake further consultation (include details of any future consultation exercises planned, or planned improvements as a result of consultation, in your Improvement Plan attached).</p> <p>The extent of the consultation exercise should be in proportion to the effect that the policy is likely to have, and may not need to be detailed.</p>		<p><i>Consultation was initially carried out with main stakeholders but insufficient evidence gathered on target group needs . The standard letter used for consultation treats stakeholders as an homogenous group and does not invite feedback relating to issues of diversity or vulnerability.</i></p> <p><i>Later consultation with staff, service users and partner agencies concentrated on the impact of this policy on the six equality strands and this data has been used to ensure a more thorough equality impact assessment.</i></p>	
<b>15. Monitoring</b>			
How are you going to monitor or carry out regular checks on the effects this <b>function, strategy, policy, procedure or service</b> has on different racial/equality target groups?		<p><i>There are no plans published within the policy (See IP 7) however the following E &amp; D monitoring is carried out:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• Equalities &amp; Diversity Continuous Improvement Group meet quarterly</i></li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newark and Sherwood Partnership Housing Forum assess the CBL policy bi-annually for effectiveness.</li> <li>• Monthly monitoring of CBL including housing applications and tenancies awarded by ethnicity</li> <li>• Efficiency tested by NSDC Housing Strategy</li> <li>• Housing Choice Satisfaction Surveys are monitored monthly by ethnicity</li> </ul>
<p>A list of all Impact Assessments undertaken need to be published on an annual basis</p>	
<p><b>16. Publishing &amp; Communication</b></p>	
<p>What methods do you use to communicate this function, strategy, policy, procedure or service? (Include review and assessment of methods, media, translations, interpretation etc, bearing in mind the extent to which these media forms are accessible to all sector of the community):</p>	<p><u>Externally</u>  <i>Information sharing meeting with the Newark and Sherwood District Federation of Tenants and Residents Association.</i>  <i>Website</i>  <i>Home from Homes</i>  <i>Joint working with partner agencies</i>  <i>Housing Monitoring Groups</i>  <i>Local Press</i></p> <p><u>Internally</u>  <i>Staff training</i>  <i>Team Meetings</i>  <i>Home Comforts</i></p>

**17. Training**

Please list any staff training issues on equalities, diversity or inclusion arising from this assessment (and include this in your improvement plan attached)

EIA Team:

- Maria Brambles
- Tanya Keeley
- Constance Hall

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Name in Print

(Service Leader Responsible for implementing this function, strategy, policy, procedure or service)

Date

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Name in Print

(Lead officer with responsibility for the effective working of this function, strategy, policy, procedure or service )

Date

**Please list actions that you plan to take as a result of this assessment (continue on separate sheets as necessary)**

## Choice Based Lettings Policy - Improvement Plan

Issues to be addressed	Action to be Undertaken	Desired Outcome	Who is Responsible and Timescale
<i>1.Concerns regarding method of assessment of medical need</i>	<i>Review method of assessment of medical needs</i>	Create robust process and improve customer confidence	Tanya Keeley – post CBL policy implementation – Jan 2009
<i>2.Non-bidding due to lack of technical knowledge</i>	<i>Intensive revision of waiting list and continued rolling review.</i>	<i>Issues of vulnerability to be addressed including non bidders</i>	<i>Frank Bartle October 2008</i>
<i>3.Advert print size too small in Mansfield Chad</i>	<i>Increase font size of advert</i>	<i>Improve accessibility of advert for those with sight difficulties</i>	<i>Tanya Keeley – Sep 2008</i>
<i>4.Insufficient data held on housing management system on aids and adaptations</i>	<i>Housing management system to be regularly updated with adaptation details and access to outstanding adaptations list given to Housing Choice</i>	<i>Improved data to enable property features to be advertised and allocated to applicants with a proven medical need for adaptation and to enable HC to match void adapted properties to those on adaptations waiting list</i>	<i>Jason Cannon – August 2008</i>
<i>5.Proof of ID for housing applicants</i>	<i>Give customer alternative options</i>	<i>Prevent discrimination for transgender applicants</i>	<i>Tanya Keeley – July 2008</i>
<i>6.Lack of data/ knowledge on take-up of service by E &amp; D groups</i>	<i>Housing Application form to be improved to include questions regarding faith/belief, sexuality and vulnerability</i>	<i>To enable an accurate evaluation of the appropriateness of the policy</i>	<i>Tanya Keeley</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>New form to be implemented by Sep 08</i></li> <li>• <i>Housing Register to be renewed with enhanced profile of applicants by Jan 2009</i></li> </ul>

<p><i>7. No published plans for monitoring and review</i></p>	<p><i>Ensure regular meetings of CBL Continuous Improvement Group</i></p>	<p><i>To enable regular monitoring , review and development of service</i></p>	<p><i>Tanya Keeley – November 2008</i></p>
<p><i>8. Local lettings policy</i></p>	<p><i>Robust monitoring of any local lettings scheme to ensure advantages outweigh disadvantages for excluded groups. Local lettings schemes should reflect the profile of the community and be regularly reviewed for relevance</i></p>	<p><i>The desired outcome would be a successful, sustainable community demonstrated which justifies this intervention</i></p>	<p><i>Julie Davidson – following implementation of new CBL policy – January 2009</i></p>

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